

# CEA.

Committed to Ending Abuse

## Complaints Policy



# Complaints Policy of CEA

CEA views complaints as an opportunity to learn and improve for the future, as well as a chance to put things right for the person that has made the complaint.

Our policy is:

- To provide a fair complaints procedure which is clear and easy to use for anyone wishing to make a complaint
- To publicise the existence of our complaints procedure so that people know how to contact us to make a complaint
- To make sure everyone at CEA knows what to do if a complaint is received
- To make sure all complaints are investigated fairly and in a timely way
- To make sure that complaints are, wherever possible, resolved and that relationships are repaired
- To gather information which helps us to improve what we do

## **Definition of a Complaint**

A complaint is any expression of dissatisfaction, whether justified or not, about any aspect of the service we provide.

## **Where Complaints Come From**

Complaints may come from the people who use the service currently or who have done so in the previous 12 months.

A complaint can be received verbally, by phone, by email or in writing.

This policy does not cover complaints from staff. They should use CEA's Discipline and Grievance policies.

## **Confidentiality**

All complaint information will be handled sensitively, telling only those who need to know and following any relevant data protection requirements.

## **Responsibility**

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with the Executive Director of the organisation. Reviews of complaints handling then lies with The Board of Directors.

## **Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly and updated as required.

Adopted on:....July 2015.....[date]

Last reviewed:....July 2014...[date]

# Complaints Procedure of CEA

## **Publicised Contact Details for Complaints:**

Written complaints may be sent to the Executive Director at 21 Wellside Place, Falkirk, FK1 5RL or by email at [director@cea.uk.com](mailto:director@cea.uk.com)

Verbal complaints may be made by phone to 01324 635661 and to the Executive Director.

## **Resolving Complaints**

### **Stage One**

In many cases, a complaint is best resolved by the person responsible for the issue being complained about. If the complaint has been received by that person, they may be able to resolve it swiftly and should do so if possible and appropriate.

Whether or not the complaint has been resolved, the complaint information should be passed to The Executive Director.

On receiving the complaint, the Executive Director records it in the complaints log. If it has not already been resolved, she may delegate an appropriate person to investigate it and to take appropriate action.

Complaints will be acknowledged by the Executive Director within 7 days. The acknowledgement should say who is dealing with the complaint and when the person complaining can expect a reply. A copy of this complaints procedure should be attached.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is justified or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

### **Stage Two**

If the complainant feels that the problem has not been satisfactorily resolved at Stage One, they can request that the complaint is reviewed at Board level. At this stage, the complaint will be passed to The Chair.

The request for Board level review should be acknowledged within 7 days of receiving it. The acknowledgement should say who will deal with the case and when the complainant can expect a reply.

The Chair may investigate the facts of the case themselves or delegate a suitably senior person to do so. This may involve reviewing the paperwork of the case and speaking with the person who dealt with the complaint at Stage One.

If the complaint relates to a specific person, they should be informed and given a further opportunity to respond.

The person who dealt with the original complaint at Stage One should be kept informed of what is happening.

Ideally complainants should receive a definitive reply within four weeks. If this is not possible because for example, an investigation has not been fully completed, a progress report should be sent with an indication of when a full reply will be given.

Whether the complaint is upheld or not, the reply to the complainant should describe the action taken to investigate the complaint, the conclusions from the investigation, and any action taken as a result of the complaint.

The decision taken at this stage is final, unless the Board decides it is appropriate to seek external assistance with resolution.

### **External Stage**

The complainant can complain to The Care Inspectorate by mail (Springfield House, Laurel Hill Business Park, Laurel Hill Road, Stirling, FK7 9JQ) or by telephone (01786 406363). Further information can be found at [www.careinspectorate.com](http://www.careinspectorate.com).

### **Variation of the Complaints Procedure**

The Board may vary the procedure for good reason. This may be necessary to avoid a conflict of interest, for example, a complaint about the Chair should not also have the Chair as the person leading a Stage Two review.

### **Monitoring and Learning from Complaints**

Complaints may be reviewed annually to identify any trends which may indicate a need to take further action.

# Appendix 1

## Practical Guidance for Handling Verbal Complaints

- Remain calm and respectful throughout the conversation
- Listen - allow the person to talk about the complaint in their own words. Sometimes a person just wants to "let off steam"
- Don't debate the facts in the first instance, especially if the person is angry
- Show an interest in what is being said
- Obtain details about the complaint before any personal details
- Ask for clarification wherever necessary
- Show that you have understood the complaint by reflecting back what you have noted down
- Acknowledge the person's feelings (even if you feel that they are being unreasonable) - you can do this without making a comment on the complaint itself or making any admission of fault on behalf of the organisation  
e.g. "I understand that this situation is frustrating for you"
- If you feel that an apology is deserved for something that was the responsibility of your organisation, then apologise
- Ask the person what they would like done to resolve the issue
- Be clear about what you can do, how long it will take and what it will involve.
- Don't promise things you can't deliver
- Give clear and valid reasons why requests cannot be met
- Make sure that the person understands what they have been told
- Wherever appropriate, inform the person about the available avenues of review or appeal